



USS *Reading*, PF-66

A city in Pennsylvania.

Builder: Leathem D. Smith Shipbuilding Co., Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin.

Length: 303' 11"

Beam: 37' 6"

Draft: 12' 8" fl

Displacement: 2,230 tons

Propulsion: 2-shaft VTE, 3 boilers

Range: 9,500 nm at 12 knots

Top speed: 20 knots

Complement: 190

Armament: 3 x 3"/50; 4 x 40mm (2x2); 9 x 20mm; 1 x Hedgehog, 8 x depth charge projectors; 2 x depth charge racks. For those frigates fitted out for weather patrol duty, the after 3-inch gun was removed and a weather balloon hanger was added aft.

History:

Reading (PF-66) was laid down by the Leathem D. Smith Shipbuilding Co., Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin on 23 May 1943. She was launched 28 August 1943 and was sponsored by Mrs. John C. Butterweck. *Reading* was then towed down the Mississippi and commissioned at New Orleans 19 August 1944 under the command of LCDR Nelson C. McCormick, USCG.

Following shakedown off Bermuda, *Reading* reported for fast convoy escort duty between the United States and European and North African ports. Her first such

duty began in January 1945 when she departed Norfolk for Algeria. Returning to the United States with another convoy, she made one more round-trip to the Mediterranean before the end of the war with Germany.

On 26 May *Reading* commenced conversion to a weather ship. An intricate array of meteorological equipment was installed and a supply of cold weather gear was taken on board before the *Reading* was declared ready for sea on 10 June. Her first weather station was off Boston, where she was forced to 'lie to' because it was too deep to anchor. In the fall, the weather ship moved northward and took station between the Canadian and Icelandic coasts. Weather observations were transmitted 12 times daily and homing signals were radioed to aircraft periodically. When relieved from her station, the ship put into either Argentia or Reykjavik for refueling and provisioning.

On 16 November *Reading* received orders for decommissioning. She put in at Portsmouth, Virginia, and was decommissioned there 19 December 1945. She was struck from the Navy list 5 January 1946, delivered to United Boat Service Corp., New York, and resold to Argentina in July 1947.

Sources:

The Coast Guard At War, Transports and Escorts, Vol. V, No. 1.

Conway's All the World's Fighting Ships, 1922-1946. London: Conway Maritime Press, 1992, pp. 148-149.

Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships, Vol. VI, p. 46.

